

Seafood

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THE CHANGES BETWEEN THE JAPANESE HOUSEHOLDS AND FISH,
AND EFFORTS BY FISHERIES INDUSTRY (FIRST HALF)

Recently, active efforts are made to expand the domestic consumption of fish. Japan Fisheries Association established Fish Consumption Promotion Center in 2011 and created a "Let's Eat Fish Network" in 2012. They are taking actions by holding symposiums and creating opportunity to exchange information about fish activities for different fields including retailers, fresh fish chains, volume sellers, distribution, markets, and consumers.

The efforts to expand consumption of fish means taking more DHA and EPA, which lead to health promotion of Japanese people. At the same time, fisheries would be maintained and developed. Behind this movement, there is a trend of consumers who are increasingly choosing meat instead of fish. This is especially true among children and the younger generation.

As for the reasons, fish are hard to eat because of the bones, it is time consuming to cook, it is troublesome to cleanup after eating, and it is expensive.

According to the Fisheries Agency, the country has been making efforts such as proposals of "Happy Project of the Fish Country: Fast Fish" (this will be discussed in more detail in the next report).

The present situation about consumption of marine products based on the research results of Japan Fisheries Association will be discussed below.

"Salmon" has been ranking first for the most commonly purchased fish from 2004 to 2011. The most frequently eaten cuisine using fish was "sashimi" and "sushi" followed by "grilled fish" in 2011. The results of interview survey targeting consumers reveal that consumers choose the fish they eat based on reasons such as, "my 4th grade daughter is willing to eat salmon, which has less bones." From 2004, the frequency of eating cuisines using fish for dinner began to drop. The number of families with elementary and middle school children who prefer fish over meat is small, and families with infants / preschool children to elementary school children have low frequency to eat fish.

The reason why fish cuisines are avoided is because "children do not like fish" or "the family do not like fish," "it is more expensive than meat." Children do not like fish because of the "bones" and "it is hard to eat." Also, children prefer western taste such as "curry" or "mayonnaise." From a 2007 survey, those who answered "like meat cuisine

better" accounted for 49.1%, and this number rose up to 59.5% in 2009. On the other hand, those who "like fish cuisine better" dropped from 8.7% to 8.4%.

The most common seafood cooking skills of housewives were "peeling shells" (39%) followed by "cutting fish" and "cutting squid and octopus." Cooking skills that are time consuming such as "simmering fish" ranked lower than 7th.

As for the type of seafood purchased, 96% answered, "cut seafood, and followed by "sashimi." Those who answered that they purchase "whole fish" were 28.6%. Also, the most common point that consumers consider when they purchase fish were "freshness" in 2004, while "price" ranked 1st in 2011. According to the research conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the expenditure on seafood of households with two persons or more in 2004 was 7363 yen, while meat was 6011 yen. In 2011, seafood dropped to 6200 yen, and meat rose to 6145 yen. In order to resolve the problem of falling fish consumption by using research results, here are some possible solutions: setting a price that is inexpensive, selling fish in a form that is easy for children to eat, recipe development, easy cooking techniques and ways to take out the bones, and making preparation easy.

Research Results on Consumer's Favorability of Seafood
 (Japan Fisheries Association)

Commonly purchased fish

	2004	2005	2006	2011
1	Salmon	Salmon	Salmon	Salmon
2	Tuna	Tuna	Mackerel	Saury
3	Saury	Saury	Spanish mackerel	Mackerel
4	Mackerel	Mackerel	Shrimp	Fish with white meat
5	Short neck clam	Short neck clam	Fish cake products	Yellowtail

Commonly eaten fish cuisine

	2007	2009	2011
1	Sashimi	Sashimi	Sashimi/sushi
2	Tuna	Fried fish	Grilled fish
3	Grilled fish	Cooked with seasoning	Teriyaki/fried fish

Reasons for not cooking fish cuisine

	2004	2005	2006
1	More expensive than meat	Family members dislike fish	Family members dislike fish
2	Children dislike fish	More expensive than meat	More expensive than meat
3		Cooking is troublesome	Lacks knowledge of cooking fish

Taste that children like

	2000	2007
1	Soy sauce	Soy sauce
2	Curry	Salt
3	Okonomiyaki sauce	Curry
4	Mayonnaise	Mayonnaise
5	Butter	Cream stew
6	Salt	Ketchup

Cooking skills of housewives

	Overall		Seafood	
	Good at		Good at	
1	Stir frying	63.90%	Peeling shells	39.00%
2	Washing rice	60.90%	Cutting fish	28.20%
3	Peeling	60.00%	Cutting squid and octopus	28.10%
4	Boiling	59.40%	Taking out organs	24.00%
5	Cutting meat and vegetables	57.30%	Taking off scales	19.80%
6	Mixing	57.00%	Fillet a fish	19.50%

Type of fresh fish consumers purchase

2006		2011	
Cut fish / already treated	67.00%	Cut fish	96.00%
Processed fish / untreated	39.30%	Sashimi	60.80%
		Whole fish	28.60%

Points to consider when purchasing fish

	2004	2011
1	Freshness	Price
2	Price	Freshness
3	Best season	Easiness of preparation
4	Domestic	